

Portreath School Subject Statement 2023

Subject: Geography

Leader: Lucie Clarke

Quote that guides us

"Geography underpins a lifelong 'conversation' about earth as the home of humankind."

Geography Association

Why is it important to teach Geography?

The purpose of geography is to inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives. It is important for children to understand where they live in the world and how this is similar and different to places in the rest of the world. Some children have never left Cornwall which is what makes Geography so important, it is our way of helping them to open their eyes to the wider world.

We have three **core elements** at the heart of our school: relationships, experiences and learning. All of which are key principles within the world of Geography. We want to help every child and member of staff to become a deep thinker and learner who is a confident communicator and a healthy citizen that will make a positive difference to the world. Through our key drivers we aim to promote people who are

- HAPPY AND HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS who are confident and feel like they belong in their local and global community
- Knowledgeable and creative THINKERS who master key geographical skills
- Effective and confident COMMUNICATORS who are logophiles and with a good grasp of geographical vocabulary
- Kind, respectful CITIZENS who make a positive difference to others, the community and the world through their understanding of the experiences of others around the globe
- Motivated, resilient, ambitious LEARNERS who demonstrate curiosity, independence and strive to improve

We have identified 7 **golden threads** that are the key concepts that weave throughout our history curriculum. They are: Physical and Human Features, Maps, Change, Key Facts, People, Local Area, Looking After the Environment.

These threads start in the EYFS and link the learning in geography together across the school. They help the children to make connections. By considering these threads when planning the EYFS team start to 'plant the seed' of these concepts and prepare the children for their journey in KS1 and 2. As the geography lead, I have worked with the EYFS lead to identify key learning for EYFS to prepare them for the study of geography. The children can develop so many of the key skills needed at a very early age. For example, in EYFS, children are encouraged to use basic maps and plans regularly across the curriculum. This forms a solid basis in a key map skills developed throughout the primary curriculum and is an essential tool in being a great geographer.

Key Concepts We Want All Children to Understand:

- The world is diverse in terms of people, places, resources, natural and human environments.
- There are key physical and human features.
- Places influence people and people influence places.
- Places have changed and will continue to change-some change is good and some not.
- We need to look after the environment and take care of our world.
- We can gather information about the world in a variety of ways
- Places can be represented through maps

- Economic and environmental sustainability has an impact on individuals and settlements

What we do well as a school:

As well as discrete lessons and being taught through topics, things such as locating places on maps is a regular occurrence, whether it is locating a place mentioned in a story, something that has happened in the news, where a famous person was born or where someone has been on holiday. We want geography to weave through all we do.

Geography is not all about far flung places- our local area provides a wealth of opportunities. Geography is a subject that the majority of staff feel confident in. We have a senior member of staff who completed a geography degree. As a school we feel this is a subject that we teach well. We also have a wonderful local area for field work e.g. the beach, the woods. As a school we take all the Year 5 and 6 children to London on a trip, to develop their cultural capital and to compare London with life here in Cornwall. We are an environmentally aware school, and were the sixth school in the country to get 'Plastic Free' status. This has involved visiting Parliament to speak to MPs, children writing to MPs and large companies and skyping live from the beach a school in Bristol on World Ocean Day.

Curriculum Design

For Geography we use a two-year rolling programme with at least two key geography units being covered each year in every class. These units link to and build on the previous units. Due to mixed year groups we have put together a long-term plan that ensures each class covers the relevant material. To ensure clear sequences of learning we use the Crofty MAT progression documents as a starting point to plan lessons. These give small steps that build towards key end points that link to the National Curriculum. These break down the National Curriculum statements into smaller steps. Vocabulary is a key focus and key tier 3 vocabulary is identified for each topic.

During the topic we are able to refer back to previous learning and help them to retrieve this knowledge. Briefly recapping on what we already know is a key feature of lessons. The Geography units include learning about the local area, a non-European country, a European country and the environment. It is linked to other subjects e.g. we recently did a local project that had huge links with history and we were kindly gifted the 'now and then' photographs.

There is flexibility around the curriculum to reflect what is most relevant at that time. Therefore, the countries selected are likely to vary each cycle. For example, upper KS2 explored Japan due to the Rugby World Cup being held there and Sycamore Class focused on Sri Lanka due to the TA having lived there for a number of years and could share first hand experiences. Each term we tick off the end points and small steps for Geography to demonstrate coverage.

We make good use of visits and visitors and think carefully about the timing of this to ensure the most learning happens as a result. For example, Y2/3 visited the headquarters of Shelterbox nearer the end of the topic rather than at the start and this then led onto charity work and a presentation to parents. For the local work with the Neighbourhood Development Plan, part way through the topic the children did a walk around the village with local experts and then at the end we delivered a showcase to parent. The local council came in to work with the Year 5/6, so they could understand the bigger picture. This topic was 'real' we were supporting the community with its development. A highlight was seeing the children's work on display and engaging with the World Café event one weekend. They studied the local area in order to create real art- there was a purpose and it gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge.

Resources

As well as digital maps such as Google Earth, we have two large world maps, large local maps and an aerial view photograph. These are on constant display. We have purchased a KS1 set and a KS2 set of atlases and have arranged maps, including Ordnance Survey maps for the children to use directly. We use a range of resources such as maps, photographs and artefacts. We also subscribe to Digimaps.

Knowledge Focused

Each class has a Knowledge Organiser for the geography units. The children put a copy of these in a book which acts as a record of their journey and as a resource to reaccess and revisit learning. The KO is used regularly and sent home to ensure this key information is remembered and can be retrieved. Leaflets about the topic are also sent home so parents can support learning at home. Class novels and non-fiction books are often linked to the geography topic and this helps make knowledge 'sticky', there is a reason for understanding and remembering the information. It also gives them the opportunity to apply what they have learnt.

Training

Over the last couple of years, we have had a number of training sessions in staff meetings and through twilight to explore fully the National Curriculum and design the sequence of learning. The sessions helped develop staff's subject knowledge. The NDP group came in to lead a staff meeting. We also make use of experts e.g. Charlotte Caldwell (Cornwall Council) Chris Whetter from Sri Lanka, Helen Smith-Africa, Graham May-Portreath. The head and assistant head attended curriculum training with the Crofty MAT. The teachers attended a conference by Faye Heming about curriculum and the importance of memory, and how children learn. The subject leader attends the meetings for the Crofty Geography leads.

What does monitoring tell us?

Discussion with children with their books and knowledge organisers show that children are able to articulate what they have learnt not just activities undertaken. The children demonstrated their enthusiasm and engagement with the topics. SILC visits demonstrated that the children are able to talk about what they have learnt in detail, not just what they had done. Displays around the school and books show quality work and progression across the school. Lesson observations during Ofsted demonstrated clear progression across the school in terms of learning and expectations and also demonstrated a sequence of learning and how learning builds on previous learning.

Next Steps

- Create "sticky knowledge" overview sheets of must know knowledge for map work etc.
- Any trips etc look at route and map with children beforehand and look again once we have come back.
- Slim down curriculum so things can be looked at in more depth and more time can be given to reactivation
- Refine scheme of work